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Message from the President of the United States, communicating documents not heretofore communicated to the Senate relative to the Oregon Territory, in answer to

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I herewith transmit, in compliance with the request of the Senate in their resolution of the 17th of June, 1846, a report of the Secretary of State, together with a copy of all "the dispatches and instructions" "relative to the Oregon treaty," forwarded to our Minister, Mr. McLane," "not heretofore communicated to the Senate," including a statement of the

propositions for the adjustment of the Oregon question previously made and rejected by the respective Governments. This statement was furnished to Mr. McLane before his departure from the country, and is dated on the 12th July, 1845, the day on which the note was addressed by the Secretary of State to Mr. Pakenham, offering to settle the controversy by the 49th parallel of latitude, which was rejected by the Minister on the 29th of July following.

The Senate will perceive that extracts from but two of Mr.

McLane's "despatches and communications to this Government" are transmitted; and these only because they were necessary to explain the answers given to them by the Secretary of State.

These despatches are both numerous and voluminous, and, in their confidential character, their publication, it is believed, would be highly prejudicial to the public interests.

Public considerations alone have induced me to withhold the despatches of Mr. McLane addressed to the Secretary of State. I concur with the Secretary of State in the views presented in his report, herewith transmitted, against the publication of these communications.

Mr. McLane has performed his whole duty to his country ; and I am not only willing, but anxious that every Senator who may desire it, shall have an opportunity of perusing these despatches at the Department of State. The Secretary of State has been instructed to afford every facility for this purpose.

JAMES K. POLK.

Mr. Buchanan to Mr. McLane.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
WASHINGTON, JULY 12, 1845.

Sir: Although the President does not intend to defer, as the Oregon negotiation from Washington to London, yet, as for Britannic Majesty's Ministers will doubtless afford you frequent opportunities of conversing upon the subject, it is proper that you should be well-informed of the present state of the question. For this purpose it is necessary to furnish you with a brief historical sketch of the propositions for its adjustment which have been heretofore made and rejected by the respective Governments.

The first negotiation was that of 1818, which terminated in the convention of the 20th October of that year. It was conducted by Messrs. Gallatin and Rush, as American Plenipotentiaries, in obedience to instructions from Mr. Adams, then Secretary of State under Mr. Monroe's Administration. Our Plenipotentiaries inform us that they did not on that occasion assert that the United States were perfectly entitled to the navigation of the rivers that their claim was at least good against Great Britain. They therefore offered to compromise by developing the parallel of 49 degrees as the dividing line between the two countries, and by surrendering to Great Britain the navigation of the rivers (the Columbia of course included) which might be intersected by this line. The British Plenipotentiaries

seniaries, (Messrs. Robison and Goulburn,) in answer, did not make any formal proposition for a boundary, but estimated that the river itself was the most convenient that could be adopted, and that they would not agree to any that did not give them the harbor at the mouth of the river in common with the United States." But, although they did not propose a permanent boundary, they did make a most extraordinary proposition to the American Plenipotentiaries, which

...as instantly and properly rejected. This was no less in effect than that the United States should surrender to Great Britain the exclusive sovereignty over the whole territory north of 49°

This negotiation resulted in the adoption of the third article of the convention of the 20th October, 1818, under which the United States so far yielded to the claims of Great Britain as to agree that the whole territory should "be free and open for the subjects and citizens of the two States, respectively, for the purpose of trade and commerce," reserving the claims of the respective parties not to the whole territory, but to this section of it merely.

The second negotiation on this subject, during the Administration of Mr. Monroe, was conducted, in 1824, by Mr. Rush, as the American Plenipotentiary, under the instructions of Mr. Adams. In the mean time the United States had acquired the Spanish title, embracing the whole territory in dispute, under the Florida treaty of the 22d February, 1819; and Mr. Monroe had made his celebrated declaration to the world that the American continent should no longer be subject to colonization. Notwithstanding this change in the re-

the conflicting claims of Russia, Great Britain, and the United States to the territory on the northwest coast of America, and knowing that this could only be done by compromise, authorized Mr. Rush, through the instructions of 51 or north latitude 51 degrees, or by British subjects either south of 51 or north latitude 51, to make no demarcation for the future, to stipulate that no settlement shall be made on the northwest coast, or on any of the islands thereto adjoining, by Russian subjects, south of latitude 51; or by citizens of the United States north of latitude 51 degrees, or by British subjects either south of 51 or north latitude 51, within which we are willing to limit the future settlement of the United States, because it is not to be doubted that the Columbia river branches as far north as 51°. "As, however, the line already runs, in future we insist upon the same line, and if our agents insisted upon it by Great Britain, we will consent to carry it in continuance on the same parallel to the sea."

Mr. Rush, with great ability, attempted to execute his instructions. He first proposed 51 degrees, and afterwards 49 degrees; he then proposed 47 degrees, and finally 46 degrees. The British Plenipotentiaries, (Messrs. Huskisson and Stratford Canning,) who proposed the 49th parallel as an

The third negotiation on this subject took place in 1826-27, during the administration of Mr. Adams, and was conducted by Mr. Gallatin as American Plenipotentiary under instructions from Mr. Clay, then Secretary of State. The Secretary of State, Mr. Adams, on October 18, 1826, was about to expire in his own limitation; and a most formal and serious effort was then made finally to adjust this vexed question, but it utterly failed. This negotiation displays great research and industry on both sides. Mr. Gallatin, in behalf of the United States, again offered to compromise the question by adopting a line parallel to Lewis and Clark's direct route, and to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and to agree that the navigation of the Columbia should "be perpetually free to the subjects of Great Britain in common with the citizens

The United States," provided this line should strike the northeasternmost or any other branch of that river at a point on which it was navigable for boats.

to be drawn from Cape Flattery, along the southern shore of De Fuca's inlet to Point Wilson, at the southwestern extremity of Admiralty inlet; from thence to the northern extremity of that inlet, across the strait to Hood's inlet, to the northern extremity of land in the northeastern extremity of the said inlet; along the eastern shore of that inlet, to the southern extremity of the same; from thence directly to the southern point of Gray's harbor; from thence, along the shore to the Pacific, to Cape Flattery, as before mentioned." This proposition was rejected by Mr. Gallatin, and the negotiation terminated in the convention of August 6th, 1827, which continued the third article of the convention of October, 1818, until it should be abrogated by the one party or the other.

and, south of latitude 49 degrees, our offer to them of free
 on the southern cap of that island may be deemed a reciprocal concession.

Had this been a new question, you are fully aware that the
 resident never would have presented such a proposition; but
 must not be forgotten that the American Government never
 has, although the agents who administer it are perpetually
 changing. Its course of policy towards foreign nations should
 change with every changing Administration, but ought to
 be uniform and consistent, unless for reasons of imperative

From what has been said you will perceive how wholly insensible it is for the President to accept any terms of compromise which would bring the British south of the parallel of 49 degrees; and this you may intimate to the British Ministers in conversation, should you deem it wise under all the circumstances. The only exception to this rule which could possibly be made might be the concession, for an adequate equivalent, of the small cap of Vancouver's island south of this latitude, which would be of no importance to the United States whilst it is of considerable value to Great Britain.

You will enforce our proposition upon the British Ministry
 with all the enlightened ability of which you are so eminently
 master. Should it be rejected, the President will be re-
 vived from the embarassment in which he has been involved
 by the acts, offers, and declarations of his predecessors. Af-
 terwards, if the difficulty can only be resolved by the sword,
 we may then appeal with confidence to the world for
 aid, and justice to our cause, and may anticipate the smiles
 of Heaven upon the right.

I am, &c. JAMES BUCHANAN.

LOUIS MCLE, Esq., &c.

Mr. Buchanan to Mr. McLane.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
WASHINGTON, SEPT. 13, 1845.
SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your
despatches of the 16th and 18th ultimo, the former of which
has placed in my hands by the Hon. Mr. Rietz, of South
Carolina, and to transmit to you herewith a copy of my last
note to the 'Right Hon. Richard Pakenham, her Britannic
Majesty's Minister at Washington, relative to the Oregon

tion. I am, &c. JAMES BUCHANAN.
HON. LOUIS McLANE, &c.

Mr. Buchanan to Mr. McLane.
DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
WASHINGTON, NOV. 5, 1845.
SIR: Your despatches to No. 16, inclusive, have been duly

Since the receipt, on the 21st ultimo, of your No. 9, I have had several conversations with Mr. Pakenham. His purpose, doubtless, was to ascertain whether the President would not back his withdrawal of our proposition of compromise, a conflict is intended as the basis of further negotiation; and

this suffer it to stand as the basis of further negotiation; and, if
 this could not be done, to obtain some assurance in advance
 of the manner in which a new proposition from the British
 government would be received. He did not accomplish either
 object. In these conversations, I gave him distinctly to un-
 derstand that the President could not consent to recall what
 had been already done, nor to modify, in any degree, the
 withdrawal of our offer. At the same time I served, in the
 answer to a question propounded by him, that the British

Government should think proper to make any new proposition to the Government of the United States for the settlement of the Oregon question, it would be respectfully considered by the President, without, however, feeling himself committed to any degree by the offer which had been already made and accepted, and afterwards withdrawn.

Mr. Pakenham urged that he had not rejected our proposition, but had merely refused to accept it, and endeavored by argument to impress upon my mind the distinction—not very

visions—to between the refusal to accept a proposition and its rejection. To this I replied by referring him to the subsequent part of his note, in which he expressed his trust that "the Government will be prepared to offer some further proposal for the settlement of the Oregon question more consistent with fairness and equity, and with the reasonable expectation of the British Government." This language, I observed, necessarily implied not only an emphatic rejection of our offer, but a condemnation of its character.

In consequence of my communications with Mr. Pakenham, the President, after holding two Cabinet councils on the present state of the Oregon negotiation, has finally determined

that he will not renew his former offer, nor submit any other proposition; and it must remain for the British Government to decide what other or further steps, if any, they may think it proper to take in the negotiation. You will not be surprised to find the result, as you are well aware that nothing but deference for the repeated action of his predecessors, and for the principle of compromise on which the negotiation had been commenced, as well as a sincere desire to cultivate the most friendly relations between the two countries, could have induced him so far to depart from his well-known opinions as to

Mr. Pakenham's note of the 30th of July, rejecting the proposition, became, immediately after its receipt, the subject of grave deliberation by the President. Upon a full consideration of the whole question, and after waiting a month for further developments, he arrived at the conclusion that it was his duty which he owed to the country to withdraw the proposition which he had submitted. This was accordingly done by a note to Mr. Pakenham of the 30th of August last. The President thus took his ground from which he will not depart.

This is the posture in which the negotiation now stands, and, unless in the mean time it should be changed by some action on the part of the British Government, the President intends to lay the whole subject before Congress for their consideration. I am, &c.

JAMES BUCHANAN.
LOUIS McLANE, Esq., &c.
Mr. McLane to Mr. Buchanan.
[Extracts.]
LONDON, DECEMBER 1, 1846.
Although it is well understood here that, in the present posture of the Oregon question, my connexion with it must be a great degree informal, the Earl of Aberdeen occasionally takes it a subject of conversation.

At his request, I have recently had an interview with him, when he put in my hand, to read, two despatches from Mr. Pakenham: one in explanation of his rejection, without reference to his Government, of the President's proposition; the other containing a statement of his subsequent attempts to induce you to allow the President's proposition to stand as the basis of further negotiation, or to have some assurance of the answer which a new proposition from the British Government would receive.

ought his treatment of the President's proposition justifiable—**for** the ground of his instructions, which, in his opinion, forbade the expectation that such a proposition could, under any circumstances, receive the approbation of his Government. He also . . . expresses his belief that a reference of the proposition to his Government, merely, as he supposed, to be rejected, would not have avoided the embarrassment in which the subject has been by that step involved.

In answer to these views, I had only to point out the clear sufficiency of Mr. Pakenham's explanations; and to defend and justify the withdrawal of the President's proposition upon

On obvious ground on which, in your communications, you placed it: to point out with entire explicitness the attitude of the President had determined to maintain, and the course it was his intention to pursue, in conformity with the statement made in your despatch No. 13, dated the 5th November last.

The principal object of Lord Aberdeen in seeking the interview appeared to me to be, to point out the embarrassment which he thought the President's withdrawal of his proposition had placed the Government. It was quite evident, indeed he expressly said, that he was not prepared to accept the

resident's proposition, but desired only to make it the basis for further negotiation and modified propositions from his Government, which he would have done, notwithstanding the rejection of it by Mr. Pakenham, if it had not been withdrawn at the direction of the President. He complained of the withdrawal of the proposition as unusual, if not unprecedented in diplomacy, and seemed to consider it impossible in the present posture of the affair to submit any proposition for a partition of the territory in dispute, unless he could have some assurance that the treatment which any proposition he might submit for

Under these circumstances, he could only regard the negotiation as having been terminated by the President; and this prior to further attempts at compromise being thus closed, this Government had no alternative, in its desire to preserve the peaceful relations of the two countries [other] than to propose arbitration, and abide the consequences. Indeed, I understood from him to say, very distinctly, that this course would be pursued. It may be considered certain, therefore, that if he have not been already, Mr. Pakenham will, by the present steamer, be instructed to propose an arbitration; and that, according to